



## **DIGITAL VIDEO PROJECT IDEAS**

Videos and films are often sorted by the characteristics they share. Familiar genres (kinds of films) include drama, action/adventure, comedy, science fiction, educational, and more. Even horror films are known to share style, form, and similar content.

Generally, educational films deliver useful information and are based in credible research. Some educational films might be called documentaries, news reports/broadcasts, opinions and debates, edutainment, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), interviews, experiments, training, etc.

Students produce videos for a variety of reasons – to inspire, to inform, to entertain.

***What story can you tell that might make the world a better place?***

### ***ADVOCACY for SOCIAL CONCERN***

Your team may want to focus on a social issue to voice your opinion or to raise awareness. This may be a local issue, such as school rules, public curfews, speed bumps on your street, or may be a more global concern, such as noise pollution, the ozone layer, or asteroids hitting the Earth. These opinion-based commentary type films are based in documented research, and can be effective when presented in debate style - showing both sides of the issue in order to bring awareness to a public issue of concern.

### ***BIOGRAPHIES***

A biography tells the story of someone's life by documenting key events. Profile an interesting member of the community, your family, your classmate, or anyone who you may feel has an interesting life story to tell, or is related to your subject-matter assignment. Showing different life journeys provides others with knowledge of different social perspectives. Human interest videos can also include important educational facts and visuals about history, geography, job opportunities, etc. This type of documentary film may inspire a viewer toward a new personal goal - "I'd like to do that job" or "I'd like visit Paris someday!"

### ***CAREER PROFILES***

Ever wonder what it is like to work in the medical profession? On the job videos capture "behind the scenes" workplace activities to inform about careers. These interesting videos can help people decide what careers they may like to pursue. Research and report socio-economic issues related to a career – public vs. private, salary issues, cost of living, and availability of jobs across geographic locations. Companies sell these types of videos, but it may be fun to contact a local business, private school, utility, grocer, etc. to film a career. Some businesses may even be able to use your production!

## **COMMUNITY HISTORY**

Film in your own city to tell a community story - Your team can research about a place or event that happened in your town, annual parades or sporting events. Historical documentaries depict a chronological record of events. Contact the historical society for old photos of historic sites, and secure permissions to use. It is fairly easy to film in your local community, so consider a study of a landmark (a famous bridge or the first schoolhouse) or even an artifact (pirate ship coins or ancient fossils) and produce a video from a local, historical perspective. Of course, profiling an interesting person in your community would be a great biography with a community connection. If you don't want to focus on the history, you may like to produce a simple documentary using animal, mineral, or vegetable native to your community.

## ***CURRICULUM in your COMMUNITY***

What subject-matter can you teach by filming in your own community? Decide upon a skill you'd like to clarify by using video. And then, determine where in your community you can relate the subject-matter to everyday life experiences. For example, this community-minded video *How Safe is Our School?* (<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/sciencetg/ie/speed.html>) taught students about science and social responsibility by investigating how fast the cars traveled in front of their own school. No matter what video style you choose, find a subject or skill you can teach by filming locally at the zoo, museums, beaches, lakes, amusement parks, stores, parks, the streets of a busy city, or anywhere...make sure you have permission to film in any area that is privately owned and operated.

## **DOCUMENTARY**

Public school video production won't compete with the expert documentaries that are produced, for example a National Geographic production about the sea. But, if you would like to document facts that have been researched, or share a subject-matter that you have advanced knowledge of, try to produce a short documentary video. Documentaries present certified facts, found in writing, such as evidence. Your own scripts can document, based in fact, any subject and follow documentary production style. Documentaries are generally about people (biographies) places (travel) and things (inventions, artifacts). Conveying science and nature facts are common subjects to present as documentaries.

## ***"HOW TO" VIDEO***

Training type "how to" videos show step-by-step procedures for how to make something or how to perform a service or improve a skill, such as *How to Make a Pie* or *Changing the Oil in your Car*. Demonstration videos, like aerobics, sports, and cooking shows, allow people to repeat viewing to help learn a process and to possibly follow along. These videos can be easily shared and repeated to many audiences. Instructional videos can be fun "summer camp" type subjects and still help people practice following procedures in the proper order.

## ***INTRODUCTION or ORIENTATION***

Usually as a training objective, introduction-type videos present general issues that need to be communicated to new members of a group or program. A casual, fun style can be used to welcome people and orient them to workplace common practices that may be mandatory or just "nice to know." Tours of communities are popular and useful to show people, who may be thinking of relocation, a new city. Introduction videos are sometimes used to recruit as an "interest-catcher," even in a television commercial style. It is convenient and practical to use video to clearly explain a program.

## ***INVESTIGATIVE***

Science and nature videos are popular, educational, and can be entertaining. Natural phenomenon films analyze measurable changes using digital equipment, as we see in ghost story videos. Investigative videos include experiments, statistical facts, interviews, and objective reporting. Present the audience with a question, then set out to provide facts with visuals to present possible answers to what may need further investigation. Investigative videos reach further than a simple documentary by presenting the facts that are known, yet this style typically leaves the audience wondering an outcome until the end of the video, and may even end with several unanswered questions to be further explored.

## ***NEWS AND SPECIAL EVENTS***

News productions are a traditional way to inform people about what current facts impact their lives and their communities. "Talking head" videos are used to broadcast messages, or to document a special event. Journalism-type videos usually involve interviews, research, lots of script writing, plus fun-to-create captions and graphical additions. If a video is about a past event, "old news" might be known as a historical type of documentary. What is news of the past, a political or social event, may later be embellished in a docudrama video style production.

## ***SKITS & SPOOFS***

Skits are usually humorous or satirical. Parodies mimic a literary or musical style for comedic effect, or simply to mock. Humorous parodies are sometimes referred to as spoofs. Reenactments are a fun way to further study literary works. Dramatic performances could include detailed scripting and more attention to sets, costumes, and props.

### ***TELEVISION COMMERCIAL***

Create a short video commercial to market a product or service in your community. This informative video should be no longer than a standard television advertisement, perhaps 30-60 seconds. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are an effective way to provide information about important community issues, such as health and welfare assistance. Contact a local business to see if they would like to be your client for a video to advertise their product or service. Or, produce a commercial to promote a fantasy product or service using an original script.

### ***TRAVEL & TOURISM***

Documentaries of geographic locations show places that people may not otherwise be able to see. These types of videos can also provide information about the culture, climate, history, interesting landmarks of an area, and other topics about a place. These types of videos can be historical in nature or simply told from a human-interest point of view.